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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

30 April 1959

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Nuclear Test Cessation

In a characteristically bold maneuver to divide his opponents and extricate himself from a difficult position, Khrushchev, in letters to Prime Minister Macmillan and President Eisenhower on 23 April, accepted a suggestion by Macmillan for a predetermined number of annual on-site inspections of suspected nuclear explosions. This shift in the Soviet position was presented as an effort to break the deadlock on the crucial issue of inspection procedures and pave the way for an agreement to halt all nuclear-weapons tests.

Khrushchev rejected the American and British proposal for a phased approach, beginning with suspension of atmospheric tests, as an "unfair deal" designed to mislead public opinion and enable the Western powers to continue their nuclear weapons development programs. The Western proposal, advanced on 13 April, had thrown the USSR on the defensive, and Khrushchev probably believed acceptance of Macmillan's compromise proposal would not only enable him to regain the initiative in the nuclear test talks but also to exploit any Western differences on this issue.

Soviet delegate Tsarapkin at Geneva is resorting to the

time-honored Soviet tactic of demanding that the West must first accept Khrushchev's new proposal in principle before details can be discussed. On 28 April, however, he clarified the Soviet position by stating that the USSR will drop its demand for a veto on the dispatch of inspection teams if the number of inspections of suspected nuclear explosions to be permitted each year is agreed on in advance. He also announced that Moscow would agree to having a "permanent inspection team located somewhere" and to permit automatic inspection when control-system instruments indicate a suspicious event.

Tsarapkin made it clear that the USSR contemplated only a small number of annual inspections, echoing a statement by Khrushchev in his letter to President Eisenhower. Moreover, Tsarapkin insisted that the annual quota must be fixed by a "political decision," not on a technical basis, and that the three nuclear powers must now work out a "political compromise."

The political objectives of dividing the United States and Britain underlying this latest Soviet move were evident in Tsarapkin's remark that he expected the American and British delegates to support Khrushchev's new proposal, in view of the fact that the original suggestion for an inspection quota had been made by Macmillan. Khrushchev also expressed confidence in his letter to the prime minister that the British delegate at Geneva would be instructed to work for a solution on this

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PART I

OF IMMEDIATE INTEREST

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basis, "taking into account the  
considerations you (Macmillan)  
expressed in Moscow."

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